

Statewide Web Site Template

The Open Source Component Framework, offered by Kaivo

Introduction

The Open Source Component Framework is hereby offered as a template for use by organizations wishing to develop Statewide Web Sites under the FY 2001 LSC Technology Initiative Grants (TIG) RFP, issued in late February, 2001.

The components for this template are being developed by Kaivo, a consulting organization dedicated to bringing the finest in Open Source technology to government and business clients. Kaivo is already developing these components for projects sponsored by PineTree Legal Assistance in Maine, Ohio State Legal Services Association, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), and desires to offer them to the broader community at a minimal cost.

The Component Framework is being developed to serve organizations with the capacity and skills to maintain their site after initial deployment, and who would benefit from the full customization and flexibility that this level of local control over the site would provide.

General Description

The Component Framework offered here is based on the Open Source Software Development methodology - an informal set of guidelines and practices by which experts worldwide contribute collaboratively to the creation of technology products that are then shared freely with others. Open Source software is available for use at no cost, and it is not owned by any individual or corporate entity.

The core web development platform upon which the template is based, called Zope, is an Open Source tool providing highly-extensible content management, personalization, and security features.

The projects in progress in Maine, Ohio, and Washington, DC involve the creation of individualized web sites built atop the core Zope system. While each of these sites have their own particular requirements – including a wide variety of distinct web content, and distinct navigational designs and organizational identities - many of the database-driven, programmatic features of the sites (for example, the Event Calendar and Document Management System) are being developed to be highly modular and easily re-usable so they may be re-combined and configured for use by other organizations with similar needs at minimal cost.

The Open Source Component Framework is most applicable for organizations with particular needs in terms of layout, design or functionality that may not be directly satisfied by a more highly-structured system, who value the Open Source philosophy, who desire the cost and control advantages afforded by the Open Source software methodology, and who have the ability

to host and support their site after deployment, either internally or via an external ISP. (see Requirements for more.)

Core Features

The Components currently in development or planned for development within the next quarter include:

Client Legal Library

The Legal Library is an easily-browsable directory for clients to locate links to on-line resources. The administrator is allowed full control over the categories (“library shelves”), their descriptions, and the content contained within each topic area.

Document Management System

The core functionality provided by this component is the ability for users, typically advocates, to upload documents (of varying formats - .wpd, .doc, .pdf, etc.) into a central repository, and for those documents to be searched and downloaded based on “metadata” elements such as topic, author, legal category, date of submission, etc. The document repository may also be browsed by drilling down through a directory hierarchy modeled after common “file folder” metaphors such as Windows File Manager. Full text search of documents is also planned.

Training & Events Calendar

The Calendar is designed to support submission of Event information by all users, and to display the listings in multiple formats and in multiple locations on the site. Users will be able to browse listings in monthly, weekly, and daily views, and will be able to search the Calendar database to display all listings in tabular form that meet search criteria.

SmartSearch

This component provides an easy-to-use, intelligent search engine by which clients may locate helpful resources and organizations. The site administrator may identify individual pages, domains, or sub-domains to be included in the search. In order to maximize the relevance of search returns, the administrator is provided great flexibility in categorizing the on-line content (including the use of synonyms and keywords) and determining direct and indirect relationships to other content.

Membership and Security System

The core web platform includes a full, robust, and flexible security system by which content and features may be access-restricted to specific “roles” which are established at the time the site is created. Password-protected login is used to authenticate users for access to those portions of the site.

Job Database

This module provides the ability for users to submit job openings (specifying all important data elements such as description, salary range, contact info, etc.) and for those openings to be searched based on a variety of criteria.

Discussion Groups

This module allows users to participate in on-line, threaded discussions around a variety of topics, definable by the site administrator.

Link Library

This module allows individual users to submit URLs for display on a “Links” page on the site. Administrators are notified when new links are submitted and have the ability to remove them from the system if they are inappropriate or broken.

Legal Services Directory

This Component includes a searchable directory of local or statewide Legal Services organizations.

News from the Field

This Component allows authorized remote users to submit short digests of local information for posting on a public area of the site.

Requirements

The organizations that will be able to adopt The Open Source Component Framework most effectively under the terms of the LSC TIG RFP will have, or be willing to obtain:

An internal web server infrastructure sufficient to host the site, or a hosting agreement with an external ISP. The system is fully available today on all Linux/Unix-based systems. WinNT/2000 support is planned for summer, 2001.

Access to a technical resource with programming capabilities who can be trained on the core technologies so that site maintenance and enhancements may be conducted at low cost. Kaivo is the worldwide provider of Zope training and will offer one free seat of training to any organization choosing to adopt this template.

For more information about the technical requirements of the system or the expertise level necessary to support the site, contact a Kaivo representative at the number below.

Costs

The cost model for this template will vary according to an organization's hosting strategy, and to how closely the organization's requirements align with the existing component functionality.

Site Configuration and Set-up

For an organization applying the existing Component functionality "as is", the cost to combine and configure the site is \$7,300.

Kaivo is available for custom development of new component functionality or significant enhancement of existing functionality. Costs for such work will be performed at discounted hourly rates of \$100/hr.

Hosting

Hosting strategies vary by region, vendor, and individual needs. Organizations that currently have a web infrastructure will typically require no additional hardware or software to host the system. Organizations that are seeking to implement a hosted or co-hosted system will incur costs estimated as follows:

Web Server system software and hardware:	\$1,000 – \$3,000
Internet connectivity and physical hosting fees:	\$50/mo - \$200/mo (\$600/yr- \$2,400/yr.)

Training

Kaivo will offer one seat of training on the core Zope functionality to any organization adopting this model for no cost. Costs for additional seats are posted on the Kaivo web site, www.kaivo.com.

Getting Started

To find out more about The Open Source Component Framework, please contact one of the following:

Ray Agostinelli, VP Operations, Kaivo
600 17th St. Suite 2125 S
Denver, CO 80202
303.539.0200
raya@kaivo.com

Hugh Calkins
PineTree Legal Assistance
207-774-4753
Hugh.Calkins@equaljustice.org